programmes of Health and Family Welfare including RCH-II, Malaria, Blindness, Iodine deficiency, Filaria, Kala Azar, T.B., Leprosy and Integrated disease Surveillance. Further, it addresses the issue of health in a sector-wide manner addressing sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and safe drinking water as basic determinants of good health.

The year 2005-06 was the formative year for the NRHM during which the institutional framework to operationalise the Mission was set up in all the states. The Mission envisages provision of quality health care to the entire population with special focus on the underserved sections.

Technical support in research activities

2811. DR. K. KASTURIRANGAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking necessary steps to augment the research cadre in the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have evolved any specific policy to retain the experienced technical support staff to assist research activities of ICMR; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) In order to augment the research cadre in the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Government has approved the promotional avenues to all scientists upto level G and H. To retain the experienced Technical staff on Merit Based Promotion Schemes for Indian Council of Medical Research based on DRDO pattern, the matter has been taken up with Ministry of Finance. The recommendation of the Performance Appraisal Board regarding recruitment of 500 Scientists and other related issues are receiving the attention of the Government.

Blind population in the country

2812. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state: